

December 2017 THUNGMO TALES

WWF Western Arunachal Landscape Program

Formation of New CCA

Senge-Dzong CCA

The Senge-dzong CCA is situated in West Kameng district, has a varied altitude, ranging from 2100-4900m above sea level. It holds a varied diversity of flora and fauna. The significant species of this CCA is the Red panda, which is often sighted by the villagers. The CCA also houses endangered and vulnerable species Asiatic-black bear, Musk Deer, Common Leopard and Dhole. This CCA formed in June this year.

The CCA shares boundary with Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary of Bhutan from the west and Tawang district from the north and the proposed Nyukmadung CCA from the eastern and southern side. The conservation area extends to the Sela pass and Bhagajang wetland complex towards the northern part.



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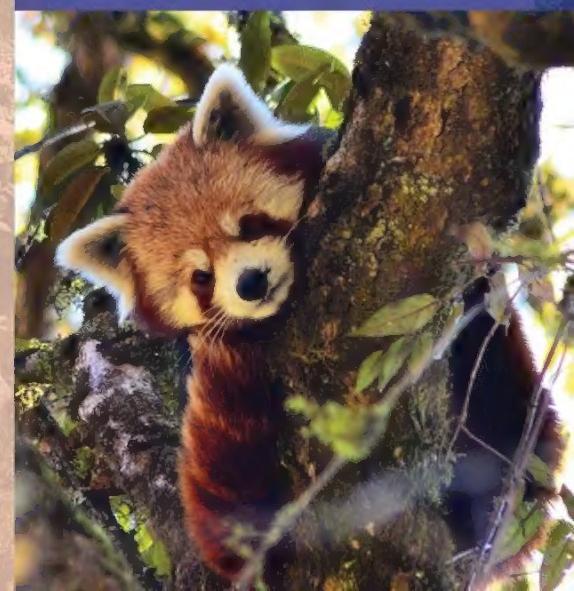
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Nyukmadung CCA

The Nyukmadung CCA is situated in West Kameng district, altitude ranging from 1800m to 4900m above MSL holds a varied diversity of flora and fauna. The species like the Red panda is often sighted by the villagers in the forests of NCCA. The CCA also houses many endangered and vulnerable species like Snow leopard, Asiatic-black bear, Musk deer, Common leopard, and Dhole, etc. The Nyukmadung CCA also formed this year and formally declared in August 2017.

The CCA shares its boundary with Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary of Bhutan in the west and Senge-dzong and Luguthang in the north and Chug and Lish villages from the east.

With the declaration of this new CCA, the Nyukmadung village looks forward to taking up key roles in conserving their forests and wildlife under the valuable guidance of WWF-India and village panchayat.

Mandala-Phudung -Khellong CCA

The MPKCCA ranging from 1700m to 4000m above MSL containing dense biodiversity rich forests which stretch all the way till the International Boundary with Bhutan. The CCA forms key habitat for species like the Red Panda, Asiatic Black Bear, Asiatic Wild Dog, Alpine Musk Deer etc. Traditional summer-gazing routes also exits within the CCA, accessed by the people from the settlements of Mandala-Phudung-Khellong.

It is managed by the MPKCCA Management Committee, under the Mandala-Phudung Panchayat. All illegal activities inside the CCA including hunting, trapping, and commercial extraction of resources and destruction of habitat are prohibited and punishable under the customary laws of Mandala-Phudung Panchayat as well as provision of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.





Conservation education with Singchung Bugun CR Management Committee

In this reporting period, we also conducted a training programme for the members of the newly made management committee of Singchung Bugun Community Reserve. A 4-day training module was designed for them, combining both indoor presentations on biodiversity and conservation issues and outdoor exercises of various field survey techniques. The training was imparted to a total of 12 youths at Ramaling of the Eagle Nest Wildlife Sanctuary in West Kameng district. All the participants took part in the training quite enthusiastically and had lively interactions and discussions among themselves on various conservation-related topics. Singchung Bugun CR is the buffer of the Eagle nest wildlife sanctuary and important habitat of the red panda and many threatened bird species including Bugun Liocichla.

Advance training with community members on patrolling and biodiversity monitoring



Thirteen community leaders are trained on different components of patrolling and ecological monitoring in the month of August. A representative from Singchung CR, Thembang Bapu CCA, two CCAs of Zemithang valley and forest guards from Joypore reserve forest, Assam participated and learn various patrolling and fitness tools. The training includes different techniques such as knot making, stretcher making, camouflage, night navigation, self-defense, laying tents, ambush theory and practical and various tools to keep one fit inside the forest. The participants also learn how to use GPS, camera, binoculars, etc. and method on how to record information on plants and animals.

"If you think the environment is less importnat than the economy, try holding your breath while counting money"

Exposure Visit



With the aim of providing exposure to the functioning and management of CCAs and its various benefits accrued to the communities, a visit was organized for the proposed management committee members of Mandala-Phudung-Khe-long CCA in July 2017. A total of 7 members were taken to Zemithang to interact with villagers and management committee members of the two CCAs there and were accommodated at the village homestays for the further experience of community-based tourism. The visitors found the visit to be quite useful and promised to spread awareness regarding CCAs in their villages upon return.

Strengthening CBT through Govt leverage

Two homestays from Thembang village and five homestays from Zemithang valley have selected for government funding to upgrade CBT services and training purposes. Each of the homestays will receive an amount of 10 lakh (soft loan with subsidy) for CBT promotion. The management committee of Thembang Bapu CCA will draft a plan on how to utilize this for better benefit of homestays and other villages of Thembang and Zemithang valley.

Conservation education programme with SSB cadres

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is a vital paramilitary force guarding international borders situated in remote biodiversity rich areas of the landscape. The aim of the program was to disseminate awareness among various levels of the SSB, especially the frontline personnel of the Border Outposts (BOP) at a central, unit level. The program was held at the Tawang unit grounds, with much encouragement from the Commandants. Around 80 frontline staff were invited to the program from various BOPs and participated with much enthusiasm and curiosity. Presentations on the region's rare biodiversity, conservation issues, and eco-friendly measures were shown, followed by interaction. During the occasion, a set of 3 specially designed posters on biodiversity of the region were handed over for distribution and display at the BOPs.





Rescued leopard cat cub receives care at Itanagar Zoo

Leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), Schedule I species of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, are the most widespread wild felids in the landscape. They are found in a wide variety of habitats starting from dense tropical forests to temperate areas and village precincts. On 28th November 2017, a leopard cat cub was rescued by Mr. Sonam Gonpapa, ASM (Anchal Samitee Member) of Mandala-Phudung panchayat and key mobilizer of the Mandala-Phudung-Khellong CCA (MPKCCA), while he was driving back from Mandala to Dirang in the evening. The cub presumably got separated from its mother and was stranded at the roadside. Sonam took the cub back to Dirang and nursed it at his house while informing us of the find and asking for suggestions for its rehabilitation. The very young age of the cub and uncertainty about its actual territory meant that leaving it back at the location where it was found was risky and would lead to the certain demise of the cub.

We informed Milo Tasser, the DFO (Shergaon forest division) of the news and asked for his help and suggestions. Due to the lack of proper rehabilitation facilities for wild cats in the region, he suggested to hand it over Itanagar zoo for professional care and safe-keeping. After further discussions with Sonam and others, the above plan was finalized and DFO himself took the initiative and arranged for the transportation of the cub from Dirang to Itanagar, also sending one of his staff look after the animal during the journey. WWF-WAL supported the transportation process financially upon the DFO's request. The cub made the journey in good health and is currently at Itanagar zoo, receiving professional care and attention.



Following the transport of the cub, Sonam was felicitated by the DFO during a social gathering of Shergaon division forest department staff at Ramaling, on 2nd December 2017. The DFO lauded the effort of Sonam and hoped for his involvement and initiatives regarding wildlife conservation in near future too.





Anthropogenic activities hampering wintering site of Black-necked crane: An account from Sangti

Manisha Kumari

Almost a month before the New Year, picnic activities have started in prominent valley regions of West Kameng and Tawang districts. Some of these picnic spots are in the wintering sites of the Black-necked Crane. Black-necked crane is a Schedule I species under the Wildlife Protection Act and is also categorized under Endangered in IUCN Red List. In India, the crane is found in eastern Ladakh (breeding site), Gurudongmar lake in Sikkim (breeding site) and western Arunachal Pradesh (wintering site). Sangti valley in Arunachal Pradesh provides a suitable wintering site for Black-necked Crane. However, the arrival of these birds in the valley has been infrequent. The last season when the birds arrived was in 2014-15. During the 2016-17 migratory season, two birds were electrocuted leading to their instant death. The power line running between the wintering site is a big nuisance for the birds. Apart from the power line, the birds also face threats from village dogs. The dogs arrive even more when the people leave food after having a picnic. Since the power line cannot be relocated, the other threats should be minimized to protect the site.

During a visit to the valley on 1st December 2017, two groups were found having a picnic in the wintering site. One of the groups which were closer to the site consisted of 3 buses and 2 cars. The village dogs could be seen around the groups looking for food. The waste disposal by the picnic groups is a serious issue. Though the site is a community land, these activities are not regulated by the villagers. Another disturbance is the tomato cultivation alongside the river. The fungicide Indofil is sprayed in the fields without proper knowledge of dosage. The runoff then degrades the river and its basin. While the impacts of this are difficult to observe, the picnic activities can be regulated and its impact mitigated to a great extent.

WWF is initiating a conversation with the ASM and other resource persons of the village, for putting two “Dos and Don’ts” notice board around the wintering. This will include all the caution steps which the picnic groups and the villagers who visit the wintering site should take. This solution may not stop the nuisance from anthropogenic activities but may regulate them to a great extent.



The Pangchenites await for their wintering

Jaya Upadhyay

The Pangchen or Zemithang valley cut across by the Nyamjang Chhu river which is the lifeline of the local residents as well as the migratory Black-necked cranes during the winters. There is a high demand for sand from Zemithang for various development works in the district. The sand collection rises post monsoon each year when the riverbed is less inundated but the river is also the one among the two wintering habitats of the Black-necked cranes in India.

This year too, there has been a huge demand and activities for sand collection for various construction works across the district but the villagers of Pangchen (Lumpo, Muscat, Kharman, Kelengteng, Socktsen) including the Management Committees of PLACCA and PLUMCCA successfully put a seasonal ban since 25th November, 2017 on the collection of sand and boulders from the riverbed to welcome the Black-necked Cranes, the guests that bring prosperity to the valley each winter season and leave before the onset of the Buddhist New Year.

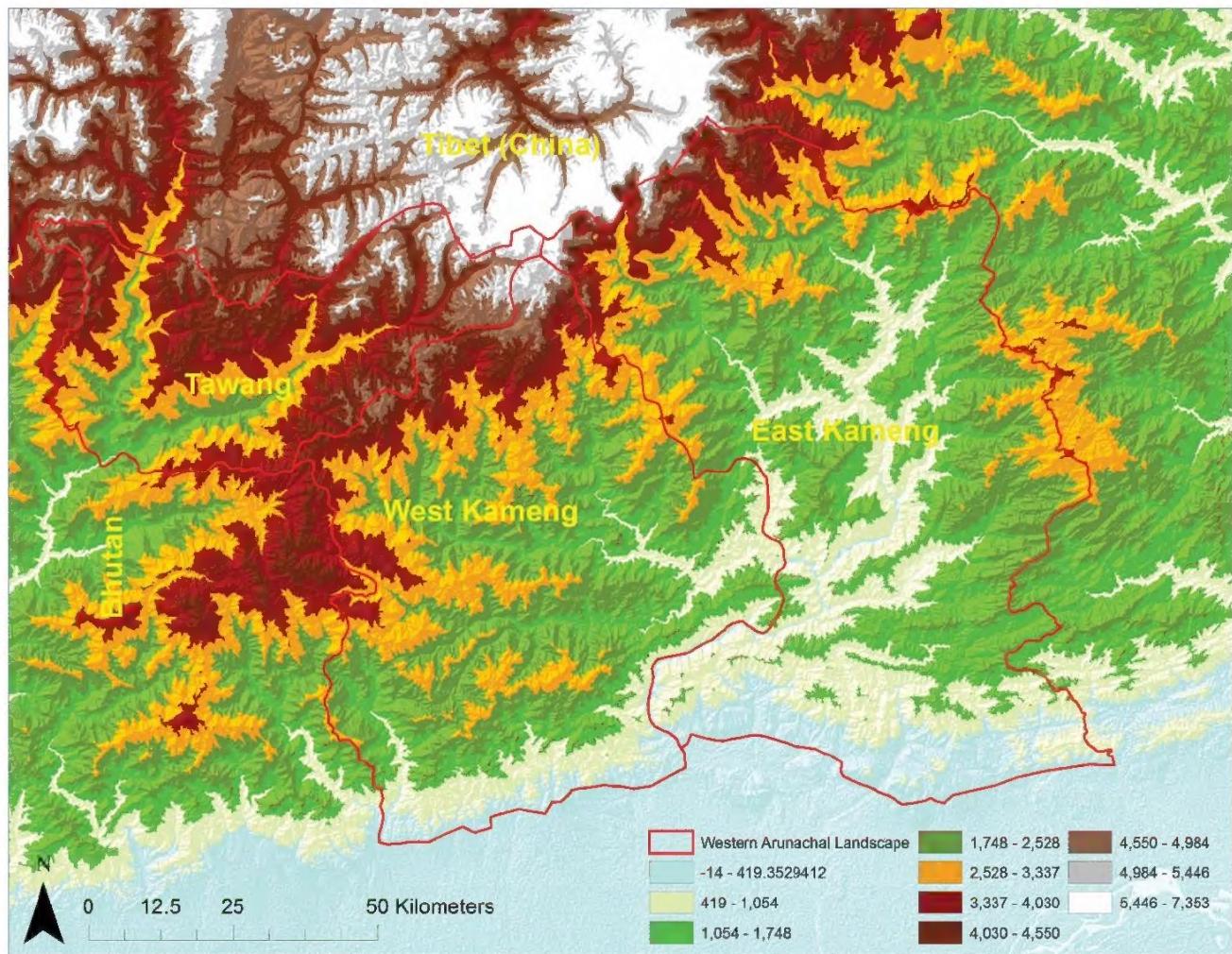
First photographic evidence of Snow Leopard from Arunachal Pradesh

A recently survey by Western Arunachal Landscape WWF-India to study the presence and population trend of Snow Leopard and its prey species in the unexplored areas of Arunachal Pradesh has yielded first photo evidence of the elusive species from Thembang Bapu Community Conserved Area (CCA) in the West Kameng district at an altitude of 3900 m asl. Others species that have been documented during the survey include Asiatic-Black Bear, Leopard cat, barking deer, blue sheep, wild dog, etc.



"The Earth does not belong to us, We belong to the Earth "

Western Arunachal Landscape Map



Current status of CCA

Sr.	Name of the CCA	AREA (Sq. km)
A.	Thembang Bapu CCA	635
B.	Pangchen Lumbo Muchat CCA	98
C.	Pangchen Lakhar CCA	85
D.	Pangchen Socktsen Diksum CCA	40
E.	Senge Dzong CCA	107
F.	Nyukmadung CCA	189
G.	Mandala-Phudung Khellong CCA	114